



Fitness Matters, Wellness Works!

Utah State Office of Education

Health and Physical Education Newsletter – November 2011 Edition

Welcome to Superintendent Shumway's Fitness Challenge!

The Superintendent is challenging all members of Utah's educational community to get active and fit during this school year. More than two thirds of our nation's adult population is either overweight or obese- *in Utah it is about 57% of the population*- so most of us can afford to lose some weight and improve our overall fitness. Obesity brings many health complications that activity and proper nutrition can prevent. The *Superintendent's Challenge* may help you improve your fitness levels and enhance your life in many ways.

Resources

Superintendent Shumway is asking education staff to create positive ways to increase fitness at school and district levels. Tools are available at the [USOE Health and Physical Education website](#) that will assist participants in their quest to improve fitness. Included are links to self-assessment fitness measures, tools to track progress, and guides to healthy eating. More will be added as we progress through the school year.

Getting Started

- (1) Start small and keep it simple. Make one change today and then you're ready to make another. Before you know it, you've stopped making poor choices, and started making life choices!
- (2) Recruit a *fitness friend(s)* to share workouts and encouraging words.
- (3) Challenge your teaching staff to get involved with improving fitness and to participate in the **May 2012 5K Fitness Event at Wheeler Farm**.
- (4) Take the American Heart Association's health self-assessment, ***My Life Check***, www.mylifecheck.org to assist you in developing your plan.
- (5) Commit a portion of every faculty meeting to healthy lifestyle information and strategies.
- (6) Read the ***Food Rules summary*** and ***Choosing Alternatives to Emotional Reasons to Eat***.
- (7) Go to www.mayoclinic.com/health/walking/HQ01612 for information about the benefits of walking and how to get started.
- (8) Pack a healthy lunch at home and eat with a colleague.
- (9) Chart your progress by using the online ***Fitness and Nutrition Tracker*** www.mystartonline.com
- (10) Have Fun!

Health and Fitness Newsletter

This electronic newsletter will be sent to you four times over the course of the school year. Each edition will have suggestions to improve your activity levels and nutritional habits and dates of upcoming events. Feel free to forward the newsletters to interested educators.

Educator Wellness

Educators do not have access to extensive staff-wellness programs like those employed in the corporate world. This is a chance to unite with fellow staff members at your school to improve your fitness in a fun and challenging way. Most schools have playing fields and long hallways for walking workouts (*remember, walking is still the number one activity for weight management*), fitness rooms that can be scheduled for *faculty only* during certain times of the day, and access to workout partners. There are also faculty meetings and other gatherings where time can be committed to health-related information.

Exercise-The Best Medicine!

Did you know that more and more doctors are making exercise a standard part of disease prevention in our country? Doctors are starting to ask about both nutrition and exercise levels at each doctor's visit and are prescribing exercise to their patients just as they do health-enhancing medicine. It is now well-documented that exercise helps not only physical health but it can also resolve symptoms of depression and anxiety, improve self-esteem, provide more restful sleep, decrease appetite, and build resiliency to help people quickly recover from adversity and daily stress. Dr. Robert Sallis, an MD and President of the American College of Sports Medicine, states, ***"If the health-enhancing benefits of exercise could be put in a pill, it would be the best selling pharmaceutical there ever was, as well as the safest and most effective."***

Exercise and Brain Function

Dr. John Ratey, a Harvard Professor and Physician specializing in ADHD and Alzheimer's disease, believes exercise is ***Miracle Grow for the Brain*** and prescribes it for patients of all ages. Studies at Tufts University in Boston have demonstrated that exercise can produce benefits in both strength and cardio vascular fitness even for people in their nineties.

The latest research shows that for your brain to function at its peak, your body needs to move. This is why Ratey and others believe exercise is crucial to the way you think and feel. *So, use this challenge to increase your activity levels to enhance your physical, mental and intellectual well-being. It may pay dividends for years to come!*

Events

As part of the challenge three events are planned for participants. ***Imagine Learning*** has partnered with the USOE to sponsor seven teams for the **RAGNAR Mountain Relay**. All spots were filled by educators in less than twenty-four hours. Congratulations if you are on one of the RAGNAR teams beginning your training for the June event!

In May the USOE and **UAHPERD (Utah Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance)** have partnered to sponsor **5K and 1 Mile Fun Runs** for the educational community. Encourage staff members at your school to train for this event and participate *just for the health of it!* Create unique t-shirts for your staff and show 'em off at this May event.

In June the USOE and UAHPERD will partner once again to provide a two day ***Fitness Matters, Wellness Works*** professional development event in Park City. It will be committed to staff wellness and how it relates to curriculum. All participants at this event will receive a **staff wellness manual** that will help sustain healthy behaviors in future years.

Sign up For Newsletter and Health Links

If you are reading this letter, you are already on the mailing list. To get more of our educational community involved, please forward the newsletter to colleagues who will benefit from renewed healthy habits

To be put on our mailing list go to: <https://lists.uen.org/mailman/listinfo/utahhealth-pe/>

Questions or Comments

frank.wojtech@schools.utah.gov